

WASATCH-CACHE NATIONAL FOREST AQUATICS PROGRAM 2000 ANNUAL REPORT

Stream Surveys

To effectively protect, maintain and restore our Forest's aquatic resources we must know what aquatic species are found where. From 1993 to 2000 the Forest had surveyed over 230 streams to determine species composition, population size, and to take tissue samples for genetic analysis. In 2000 this work continued in the Woodruff and Ogden River Drainage. The Wasatch-Cache National Forest cutthroat trout distribution survey uses electroshocking to capture fish within fixed stream reaches. These fish are identified to species, measured, fin clipped for genetic analysis, and released. Up to 10 whole fish are collected for meristic (size measurement, fin ray and scale count) analysis.

Habitat data is also collected at each sample reach. For the past 4 years, this survey method has been used to systematically sample streams throughout the Forest, from north to south. The distribution survey was used on 44 streams on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest and 4 on the Caribou National Forest in 1999, mostly in the Logan River area. During 2000, an additional 24 streams were surveyed on or near the Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

Forest Planning

Forest Planning continued throughout FY2000. Alternatives cover the broad spectrum that we have heard from the public. The alternatives range from significantly reducing man's activity to increasing timber and grazing outputs. One of the primary questions being asked is: Are the sensitive and threatened and endangered species going to be viable during these next 10 to 15 years. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement should be out this winter.

Lakes Surveys

As part of our fieldwork this year, we revisited the upper Provo River area to look at how the lakes that were stabilized in the 1990s are recovering. In July, Fire, Island, Duck, Weir, Marjorie and Long lakes were field checked to look at revegetation efforts and to see if designated campsites off the lakeshores were reducing lake impacts. Overall the designated campsites were being used. There were only a few locations where people had camped down on the lakeshores. We also looked at Round, Sand and Fish lakes. Forest Service fish biologists also assist other programs in accomplishing their program of work.

Other Projects

Some of the projects we assisted the Forest with in FY2000 include the fire suppression and reclamation, road management and restoration, grazing allotment planning, timber sale planning and implementation. We also prepare biological evaluation for sensitive aquatic species and biologic assessments for threatened or endangered aquatic species. We

also work closely with USFWS through the conservation agreements and strategies for the Colorado River and Bonneville cutthroat trout, the spotted frog and the least chub. Because of the amount of work that is currently occurring on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest it is impossible to provide a detailed description or even list every project. It is also impossible to provide full credit to everyone that assisted in the work.

We recognize that any successful organization has many behind-the-scenes helpers, from the clerks to district rangers and forest supervisors. If you have any questions or would like to assist on the forest just let us know. This past year we also added Paul Chase, a fish biologist, who will provide service for the Logan and Ogden Districts. We will be losing Steve Phillips this coming fiscal year. Steve's work on the North Slope has been immense. The Forest will certainly feel the loss.

Paul Cowley, Forest Fish Biologist